

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A wafer fabrication system, comprising:
a power source coupled to a plasma system by circuitry;
wherein the endpoint for plasma etching is determined by measuring
the voltage across an element of said circuitry.
2. The system of Claim 1, wherein said element is a resistor.
3. The system of Claim 1, wherein said circuitry includes impedance
matching circuitry.
4. The system of Claim 1, wherein said voltage is a DC voltage
corresponding to a DC voltage within the plasma system where
said plasma etching occurs.
5. A wafer fabrication system, comprising:
a plasma system for etching a material within said plasma system;
circuitry coupled to said plasma system;
wherein said etching ends when a voltage across an element
external to said plasma system undergoes a predetermined
change.
6. The system of Claim 5, wherein said element is a resistor.

7. The system of Claim 5, wherein said voltage is a DC voltage corresponding to a DC voltage within the plasma system.

8. A method of endpoint detection in a plasma etching system, said system having an RF power source coupled to a plasma chamber by a matching network, comprising the actions of:

5 monitoring a voltage across an element in said matching network;

and

changing etching parameters when said voltage undergoes a predetermined change.

9. The method of Claim 8, wherein said voltage is a DC voltage corresponding to a DC voltage in said plasma chamber.

10. The method of Claim 8, wherein said element is a resistor.

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11. The method of Claim 8, wherein said predetermined change is a voltage drop of not less than 5%.

12. A method of endpoint detection in plasma etching, comprising the actions of:

measuring voltage across a plasma system by measuring a voltage difference across an element that is external to said plasma system; and

5 stopping etch when said voltage decreases a predetermined amount within a predetermined time.

13. The method of Claim 12, wherein said element is a resistor.
 14. The method of Claim 12, wherein said voltage is a DC voltage.
 15. The method of Claim 12, wherein said predetermined amount is a voltage drop of not less than 5% and said predetermined time is not less than 3 seconds.
 16. A method of endpoint detection in plasma etching, comprising the actions of:
measuring the voltage across a resistor, said voltage sensitive to changes within the plasma system where said plasma etching occurs;
halting said etching based on a change in said voltage.
 17. The method of Claim 16, wherein said resistor is part of impedance matching circuitry between said plasma system and a power source.
 18. The method of Claim 16, wherein said voltage is a DC voltage.